

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

05-376A

Orleans

EAS.1303

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): North Eastham

Photograph



Address: 55 North Sunken Meadow Road

Historic Name: Robert and Dorothy Hayes House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: [1950-1952]

Source: Deed research, 1952 USGS aerial survey

Style/Form: Ranch

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Outbuilding (ca. 2000, use unknown)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

None on record

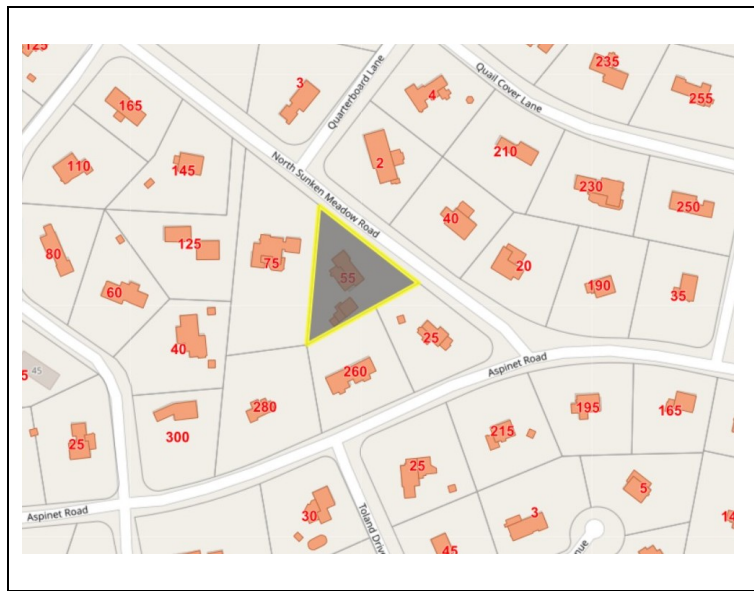
Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.52 acres

Setting: This triangular parcel is located on the south side of North Sunken Meadow Road near the intersection with Aspinet Road. The house is set back slightly from the street. The property around the house is landscaped with lawn, foundation plantings and a short gravel driveway. The surrounding area includes modest houses, most dating from the early- to late-20th century.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

55 NORTH SUNKEN MEADOW ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The Robert and Dorothy Hayes House, built in ca. 1950-1952, is a modest ranch that has an L-shaped footprint. The house appears to rest, at least in part, on a concrete foundation. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The low-pitched shed roof is clad in asphalt shingles and has a projecting box cornice. A brick chimney rises from the roof ridge. The left end of the gable roof appears to extend farther, creating an open porch below. The windows appear to be early, if not original, and include wood, 8/8 and 6/6 double-hung sash in frames that abut the roof entablature. The front entrance is set in the corner formed by the "L."

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

As can be seen from the 1910 Barnstable County Atlas, North Sunken Meadow Road at that time was very sparsely settled (Figure 2). This house has an Assessor date of 1936, but the house is not shown on the 1938 United States Geological Survey (USGS) aerial photographic survey of Cape Cod. Title research goes back to William B. Steele, Jr. (1899-1977). He was the son of William Steele, Sr. (1855-1951) who was a farmer and part-time barber. William Steele, Sr. was also active in real estate in Eastham, sometimes involving his son, William, Jr., who was listed as a shell fisherman in the 1930 census, and was divorced and living with his parents in the 1940 census. He married Anna Josephine Wells in 1942 (second marriage for both).

The deed or deeds wherein Anna and William B. Steele, Jr. bought this land have not been identified, but in January 1949, this parcel became part of a 7-lot subdivision plan prepared for William Steele, Jr. (Plan 22035A, Figure 3). That plan shows this parcel as vacant. In 1950, the Steeles sold this property, identified as Lot 4 as well as Lot 5. The deed referenced buildings, but does not appear to have included this house. However, by the time the 1952 USGS aerial survey was conducted, this house appears to be in place (Photo 4).

Lots 4 and 5 were sold in 1950 to Robert and Dorothy W. Hayes of Eastham.¹ Robert Warren Hayes (1922-2022) was born in New Bedford. He moved to Eastham as a child and was living with his aunt and uncle on Kingsbury Beach Road when he attended the one room schoolhouse in Eastham, and eventually graduated from Orleans High School in 1944. He joined the Air Force during

¹ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Book 751/ Page 385.

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WWII. In 1946, he married his wife, Dorothy, in Eastham. He worked for Henry Coffin Pole Line Construction and eventually Farrell Electric until retiring in 1986. In 1989, Robert and Doroty Hayes sold this house on Lot 5 to the current owners, Robert F. and Roberta C. Bonalumi then of Austin CT, now of Eastham.²

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1910 Map, *Atlas of Barnstable County*, Boston, MA: Walker Litho. & Publishing Co., 1910.

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<https://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/APA/Sturgis/#panel=home>.

Dunham's 1929 Eastham (Mass.) Street Directory.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Reconnaissance Survey Report: Eastham." Typescript, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, 1984.

Town of Eastham Tax Commitment Books. 1902-57.

United States Geological Survey. Aerial Survey 1938-2020,

<https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/cape-cod-chronology-viewer/>.

www.ancestry.com - Vital records.

www.capecodtimes.com/obituaries/pneo0298465 (Robert W. Hayes obituary).



Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View from Sunken Meadow Road, looking southwest.

² Book 6882/ Page 127.

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Figure 2. Detail of 1910 Barnstable County Atlas (arrow added).

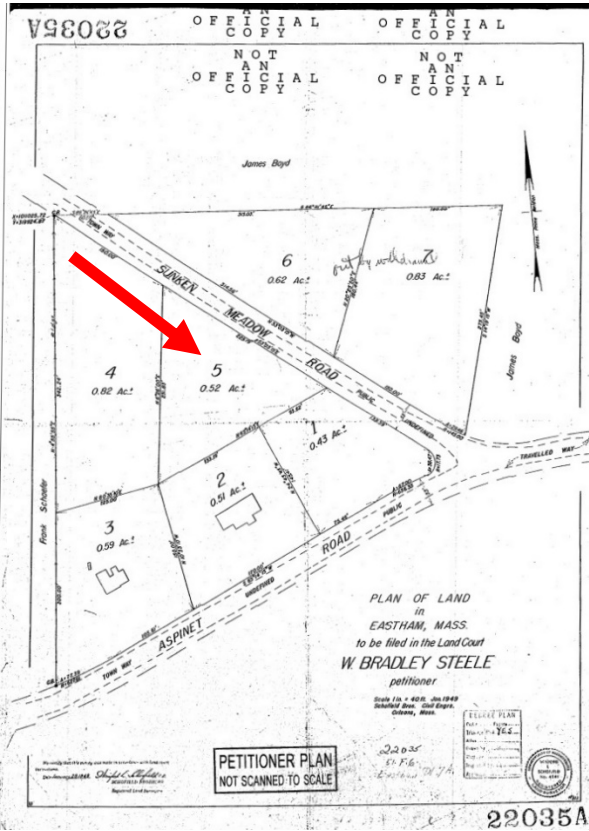


Figure 3. 1949 Plan of Land, Lot 1, Plan #22035A (arrow added).



Photo 4. Detail from 1952 USGS aerial survey.